

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 ACDA-07 EB-07 /100 W

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R 051002Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6835

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1885

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, TH

SUBJECT: FURTHER ON LAO-THAI NEGOTIATIONS

REF VIENTIANE 1870

SUMMARY: IN RECENT LAO-THAI NEGOTIATIONS, THAI REPORTEDLY
RAISED SUBJECT OF LAO ACCEPTING RETURN OF LAO REFUGEES FROM
THAILAND, AND LAO REPORTEDLY PROMISED TO DO SO WITHOUT REPRISALS.
THAI PLAN SEND BACK ONLY THOSE WILLING TO GO. ACCORDING THAI
EMBASSY SOURCE, THAI FOREIGN MINISTER PROMISED TO RECOMMEND THAT
CABINET REOPEN ADDITIONAL BORDER POINTS WITHIN TEN DAYS AFTER
END OF VIENTIANE TALKS. LAO ARE APPARENTLY WAITING FOR REOPENING
BEFORE FREEING THAI PRISONERS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF REVIEWED LAO-THAI NEGOTIATIONS WITH LAO FOREIGN
OFFICE DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL KHAMTHAN RATANAVONG AND THAI
EMBASSY CHARGE CHET NAVARAT (PROTECT BOTH). CHET DID NOT
ATTEND NEGOTIATIONS BUT TALKED WITH MEMBERS OF THAI DELEGATION.

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2. BOTH SAID THAT TWO SIDES HAD CONDUCTED NEGOTIATIONS AMICABLY BUT THAT TALKS HAD GONE ON LATE AT NIGHT AND INTO MORNING OF LAST DAY. INDICATIONS WERE THAT TWO SIDES HAD NUMBER OF DISAGREEMENTS TO RESOLVE BEFORE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED. CHET SAID LAO TOLD THAI THAT PRIMIN KAYSONE HAD PERSONALLY APPROVED SUBSTANCE OF AGREEMENT.

3. ON BORDER REOPENING, CHET SAID THAT SINCE THAI CABINET HAD ORIGINALLY MADE DECISIONS REGARDING BORDER CLOSING, CABINET WOULD HAVE TO MAKE DECISION TO REOPEN ADDITIONAL POINTS. HE SAID THAT THAI FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHAI RATTAKUN INDICATED AT AIRPORT DEPARTURE THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT CABINET REACH SUCH A DECISION WITHIN TEN DAYS. CHET THOUGHT, BUT WAS NOT CERTAIN, THAT ADDITIONAL BORDER POINTS WOULD INCLUDE CHONG MEK NEAR PAKSE AND MUKDAHAN OPPOSITE SAVANNAKHET, WHICH EMBOFF NOTED HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN BANGKOK ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER. CHET ARGUED THAT THAI PEOPLE, NOT MILITARY, OPPOSED BORDER REOPENING, AND PEOPLE THOUGHT FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS FULL OF COMMUNISTS TO PURSUE REOPENING AND OTHER POLICIES.

4. CHET THOUGHT THAT LAO WOULD WAIT FOR THAI TO OPEN ADDITIONAL BORDER POINTS BEFORE FREEING THAI PRISONERS. HE SAID THAT EMBASSY KNEW OF ABOUT TWENTY THAI PRISONERS STILL BEING HELD IN LAOS, PLUS ABOUT THREE WHO HAD BEEN SENT TO VIENGSAI OR ELSEWHERE IN NORTHERN LAOS, PLUS ABOUT 100 REPORTEDLY AT REEDUCATION CAMP FOR LAO "VICTIMS OF OLD REGIME" NEAR NAM NGUM DAM. REPORT OF THAI AT CAMP CAME FROM THAI NEWSPAPERMAN AND DR. PHAITUN, CHAIRMAN OF ASSEMBLY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, WHO HAD ASKED TO MAKE VISIT TO CAMP WHICH LAO PROTOCOL OBLIGINGLY LAID ON. CHET ALSO SAID THAT LAO HAD IN PAST ALLOWED SOME THAI PRISONERS IN LAOS TO LEAVE. HE ADDED THAT MANY RESIDENT THAI WERE LEAVING LAOS ON THEIR OWN AND ASKING THE THAI EMBASSY TO GET THE LPDR TO AUTHORIZE THEM TO MOVE THEIR BELONGINGS TO THAILAND. THE THAI EMBASSY HAD SUCCEEDED IN THIS EFFORT, CHET SAID. HE ADDED THAT CHINESE IN LAOS WHO FORMERLY HELD BOTH GOC PASSPORTS AND THAI RESIDENCE CARDS WERE NOW OBTAINING PRC PASSPORTS AND MOVING TO THAILAND. OTHER SOURCES CONFIRM LARGE EXODUS TO THAILAND OF CHINESE WHO HAVE OBTAINED PRC PASSPORTS IN LAOS.

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5. REGARDING FUTURE DISCUSSIONS ON TRADE AT OFFICIAL LEVEL MENTIONED IN COMMUNIQUE, KHAMTHAN INDICATED THESE WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THAI MOVE ON BORDER. CHET THOUGHT LAO FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUNE WOULD VISIT BANGKOK SHORTLY, IN RESPONSE THAI INVITATION, AFTER WHICH OFFICIAL TALKS WOULD BE SCHEDULED. KHAMTHAN ALSO SAID LAO HAD DISCUSSED LOWERING CHARGES TO TRANSPORT GOODS THROUGH THAILAND TO LAOS BY GETTING ANOTHER CONTRACTOR AT LOWER RATES THAN EXPRESS TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION.

CHET INDICATED LAO WANTED RTG EITHER TO SET UP STATE TRADING ORGANIZATION OR ELSE CONTROL PRIVATE TRADERS IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH LAO STATE TRADING CORPORATION.

6. CHET SAID MAIN SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS NOT MENTIONED IN COMMUNIQUE WAS LAO REFUGEES IN THAILAND, WHICH HE INDICATED THAI HAD RAISED BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABLE CARE FOR THESE PEOPLE. LAO AGREED, HE SAID, TO TAKE REFUGEES BACK WITHOUT REPRISALS, WHILE THAI WOULD NOT FORCE THEM TO RETURN. CHET, WHO HAS VISITED REFUGEE CAMPS IN NONKHAI, PERSONALLY DOUBTED MANY WOULD WANT TO RETURN, PARTICULARLY SINCE REFUGEES CONTINUE TO CROSS, TELLING THOSE IN CAMP HOW BAD CONDITIONS IN LAOS ARE.

7. ASKED ABOUT STATEMENT IN COMMUNIQUE THAT NEITHER SIDE WOULD ALLOW ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED AS A BASE TO INTERVENE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, CHET SAID RTG WAS NOT SUPPORTING GUERRILLAS IN LAOS WHILE LAO COULD NOT CONTROL BORDER TO PREVENT SUPPLIES GOING TO THAI INSURGENTS. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SENIOR LAO OFFICIAL HAD BEEN OVERHEARD IN RESTAURANT BOASTING THAT LAOS WOULD SEIZE THAI NORTHEASTERN PROVINCES IN THREE YEARS WITHOUT SHEDDING A DROP OF BLOOD.

8. CHET ALSO SAID THAT PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENT OF NEW THAI AMBASSADOR TO LAOS WAS SOMEWHAT PREMATURE. REPORT HAD EMERGED FROM CABINET MEETING, HE SAID, BUT THAI HAD NOT EVEN BEGUN TO REQUEST AGREEMENT. AMBASSADOR SWATE KOMALABHUTI SEPARATELY TOLD EMBOFF, HOWEVER, THAT HE EXPECTED HIS ANNOUNCED TRANSFER TO ROME AND ARRIVAL OF HIS REPLACEMENT WOULD TAKE PLACE AROUND SEPTEMBER 1.
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